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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls

Statement presented by the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

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Statement

As a member of the community of peoples that stand for justice, the YMCA is concerned about the current status of women, especially young women and girls, who are being excluded from exercising their full political, economic, cultural and social rights.

In its review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and based on its experience as a worldwide grass-roots organisation, the YMCA continues to see injustices against women, despite government commitments. The YMCA considers that the Beijing + 10 Review can only be seen in the context of examining the global forces which are affecting women and impede the achievement of the Platform, including militarism, fundamentalisms and globalisation.

The YMCA considers that a chief obstacle to fulfilling the twelve critical areas of the Platform for Action is the predominance of the neoliberal model which accords priority to economic growth over people's welfare, through the implementation of economic policies that have devastating consequences for women.

The YMCA stresses that women's perspectives should be incorporated in all the areas of global and regional policy of the United Nations and multilateral institutions; otherwise, the gender impacts of policy choices will continue to be ignored. It is also important to integrate a gender perspective in the implementation and review of the Millennium Declaration.

The YMCA further recognises that urgent action is needed to obtain commitments from governments and the United Nations to more targeted and time-bound indicators and measurable goals for the implementation of the Beijing Platform, as well as adequate resources and technical support. The YMCA ratifies its support to the NGO Committee on the Status of Women position that called for no renegotiation of the agreed text of the Beijing Platform for Action.

In relation to the challenges for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, the YMCA recognises that urgent action is needed to ensure that:

- the current patriarchal system is changed through educating boys and men that gender inequalities are an abuse of human rights and through mobilising boys and men to advance women's rights and gender justice

- mechanisms are set in place to increase participation and access for young women in United Nations processes

- laws recognising women's equal rights and opportunities are created and, where they already exist, are enforced.

The YMCA is mobilising both men and women members, young and adult, at grass-roots, national and international levels to address these issues and welcomes further efforts to develop practical tools for implementation.

The YMCA also welcomes cooperation among women's organisations, NGOs, UN bodies and governments in addressing gender inequalities and achieving gender justice.